

NEST AND EGGS OF THE WATER RAIL (*Rallus aquaticus*).

The bird had selected for her nest a thick turf of long grass, hollow at the bottom, on the side of the reed pond; the nest, about an inch and half thick, was composed of withered leaves and rushes; it was so covered by the top of the grass, that neither bird, nest, or eggs could be seen; the entrance to and from the nest was through an aperture of the grass, directly into the reeds, opposite where any one could stand to see the nest. The length of the eggs on an average were one inch and a half, some near a tenth more, others near a tenth less; weight, seven drachms; colour, light cream, thickly spotted at the larger ends with bright rusty red, intermixed with sunk faint lilac spots, thinly and finely spotted at the lesser ends with the same colours, with a blush of pink over the whole egg, but more towards the lesser ends; the yolk a bright blood red, brighter than any egg I ever opened, and I think that the pink tint of the shell is owing to the redness of the yolk, for after emptying the eggs it was hardly perceptible. On the 20th of June I found another nest in the same reed pond; the eggs were destroyed; this nest was built among the reeds, and very near the water. On the 10th of July I obtained a third nest, from the same place, of eleven eggs within two or three days of hatching, the nest and situation much like the first.—JOHN SMITH, Yarmouth.

WALKING OF THE SEAL.

The common seal in the Zoological Gardens, when on the land, scarcely uses its feet in walking, but only the abdominal muscles, jerking itself forward by a series of convulsive actions. It only used its fore-feet to assist in balancing itself, and when it turned on one side it expanded its hinder feet, which are generally contracted and held together, with the depressed forked tail between their base. This does not arise from any imperfection in the formation of the fore-feet, for it used them as hands to bring bodies near to its mouth.—J. E. GRAY.

HYDRÆ.

A. J. Corda, in the Nov. Act. Ph. Med. xviii. 299. t. 14—16, has given a very complete anatomy of the brown fresh-water polypus (*Hydra fusca*), showing that the animal is of a much more complex organization than was previously supposed, and that the digestive cavity is furnished with a short straight canal, ending with a distinct vent in the hinder part of the body near the foot or part by which it adheres.—J. E. GRAY.